

Towards The Highest Contentment

The main purpose of everyone is happiness. People do everything focusing on achieving happiness. Ordinary people in the world always find the highest goals and achievements which are beneficial to win others. However, it is very difficult to overcome others with worldly education and materials in the current knowledge and technology. Therefore, most people live without satisfaction though they are well educated and rich in the current society. Finally, they reach the end of their life with unsatisfactoriness. In this situation, it is very important to understand the Buddhist point of view about contentment.

The Supreme Buddha points out the highest and the best things that we can achieve in our short life. As intelligent people we human beings should always try to get the result of our lives. He who uses time profitably gets the results of the life. Here we have to do the highest and the best things because our life is short and rare. If we can listen to the Buddha's message, we can understand the real path that we need to practice to achieve the highest goal in our life. That message is like another bright eye to see the world wisely. If we can listen to it, understand it and practice it in our life, we are the most fortunate people in the world not only among human beings but among divine beings too. Buddhism guides us to the maximum level in spirituality in the world.

The Buddha mentions the best things that an intelligent person can acquire in this stanza in *The Dhammapada*.

*'Ārogyaparamā lābhā, San-tuṭ-ṭhi-paramaṃ dhanam;
Vissāsaparamā ñāti, Nibbānaparamaṃ sukham'.*

(Dhammapada)

(අරෝග්‍යපරමා ලාභා - සන්තුට්ඨිපරමං ධනං,
විස්සාසපරමා ඤාතී - නිබ්බානපරමං සුඛං)

Health is the highest gain. Contentment is the greatest wealth. The trusty is the best kinsman. Nibbana is the highest bliss.

Health

The Buddha says health is the highest gain. If we are healthy, it is a great benefit in our life. When we are healthy, we can live happily although we are not rich. First, Buddhism emphasizes the importance of physical health. We should have good habits about the quality and quantity of food that we take for physical health.

Buddhism discusses not only physical health but mental health as well. We can be healthy physically more than one hundred years but not even for a second mentally as long as our mind is with delusion. If we can purify our mind from negative thoughts such as desire, hatred and delusion, even though we are sick physically, we can maintain our mind with

happiness. It means we are mentally healthy. Physical illness can't disturb our mental health. If we are sick mentally, although we are wealthy, all things are useless because of unhappiness. On the other side, though someone is sick physically, if he is healthy mentally, he can live without suffering even under physical pain.

Happiness

Contentment is the greatest wealth. We do all things in our life in the name of happiness. We think that when we are wealthy, we can be happy. That is why we always try to earn money and other wealth. We can see there are many people who are rich financially in the world, but they are not happy mentally. Therefore, we have to consider what the real happiness is, how we reach the real happiness. Happiness or sadness depends on what we think, not what we have. When we are holding onto negative thoughts such as anger and desire, there is no peace of mind even though we are rich or well educated, because of polluted mind. If our mind is pure, calm and quiet with positive thoughts such as friendliness, loving kindness, compassion, it means we are happy. When we are always clever to purify our mind from negative thoughts, our mind is full with happiness even though we are not much wealthy or rich.

Trustworthy Person

The trust or trustworthy person is the best kinsman. Buddhism always emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness or righteousness. If our relatives are not honest, actually they are not kinsmen. If a person is honest and trustworthy, even though he is not a kinsman, he is a real kinsman. Therefore, trust is the most important thing when we associate people in the society. When we have trustworthy people, it means we have kinsmen. Here there is a very special thing; that is our mind or heart should be honest. It is the most important thing. If our mind is not honest when we associate with trustworthy persons, we can't get the result from them and all of them are useless. The very first thing that we should gain in our life is the honest heart. First we should be honest towards ourselves. Then we are able to find trustworthy people. If we are not honest, it is very difficult to find trustworthy people. When we are not honest, we can't distinguish between trusty and the others even though we meet them.

The Everlasting Peace

Nibbana is the highest bliss. We get a lot of bliss in our lives, but they change sooner or later, and we can't keep it as we like. According to Buddhism, Nibbana the final bliss of liberation is not like that. It is forever. It is the highest liberation from all kinds of suffering. It is not hereafter, it can be gained in this life itself. It is a visible result of practicing the real path. Peace is not achieved through violence, but through understanding and compassion. The final bliss of liberation completely depends on purification of mind from negative thoughts. There are three main unwholesome thoughts that pollute our mind. They are desire, anger and delusion. Practicing generosity and contemplating on impurity of physical body are the primary techniques

to reduce desire. Cultivating positive thoughts with loving kindness is the path to overcome anger. Listening to the Dhamma, reflecting on it and practicing it is the path to get rid of delusion.

The everlasting happiness depends on how far we have overcome suffering. Cessation of suffering depends on our understanding of arising and ceasing of suffering. Understanding of life which consists of body and mind helps understanding of suffering. When our eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind contact with external objects such as forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, mental formations, the experience arises at the moment. Simultaneously, five aggregates arise when a sense contacts with an object and mind. Five aggregates are: matter (*Rupa* - රූප), feelings (*Vedanā* - වේදනා), perception (*Saññā* - සංකල්පනා), mental formations (*Sankhāra* - සංඛාර) and consciousness (*Viññāna* - විඤ්ඤාණ). Five aggregates are always together. They can't be separated. They could be realized by wisdom. These five aggregates are the bottom line of all our experiences which we receive through our senses. The nature of these five aggregates is that they weren't here before the experience. And also, they won't remain after the experience. Understanding of the dependent origination directly focuses on comprehension of five aggregates. The Buddha advises everyone who are in every spiritual level to reflect on five aggregates as arising, ceasing, enjoyment, danger and liberation. Every moment five aggregates arise when conditions are together. Also, they immediately cease when conditions separate. There is an enjoyment in these five things, but enjoyment is less, danger is a lot. That is why wise people must find liberation from five aggregates. The Buddha says the highest education that a wise person should gain is the comprehension of five aggregates.

As a result of the union of the five aggregates, when factors are together, we have experiences through our senses such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body. When factors (or conditions) are separated, the experience ceases. The highest intelligence that Buddhism declares is the intelligence that "Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not go to (the future) occurrence" (*Ahuttvā sambhutam hutvā na bhavissati* - අහුත්වා සම්භුතං භුත්වා න භවිස්සති). If someone can understand this ultimate truth practicing insight meditation, that is the only way to get rid of suffering. This is the main teaching that the Buddha realized, discovered and preached to the world to get rid of suffering

The knowledge is one of the most important things that we should have from the beginning to the end on the path of purification. We must have a clear knowledge where we go, what we practice, and what the results of our practice are. According to this knowledge, we have to know that the first step of liberation is discipline or virtue (*Seela*). The second step is tranquility or concentration (Samadhi) that means focusing on one's mind with positive thoughts. The third step is wisdom (*Paññā*) that means seeing impermanence as arising and ceasing about all our experience which we get through our senses. After we get this knowledge clearly, we have to think, investigate or reflect on it again and again in our day to day life focusing on our body and mind. It is named in Buddhism as wise investigation or wise reflection (*Yoniso*

Manasikāra). We should be clever to increase the time that we reflect on reality as it is, gradually. On the other hand, we have to purify our mind from negative thoughts, practicing meditation to develop above experience. Here we practice tranquility meditation (*Samata Bhāvanā*) and insight meditation (*Vipassanā Bhāvanā*). When we fulfil all these three qualities above, we have practiced mindfulness which is very important. Without mindfulness or awareness, we can't reach real knowledge, reflection or meditation. If we practice all of them, right understanding (*Sammā Ditthi*) also should increase gradually. Right understanding, understanding of impermanence is the very important quality when we go on the path of liberation.

We lose our peace of mind because of ignorance of life. Achieving wisdom decides Getting rid of suffering. To eradicate delusion which is the main cause of suffering, it is very essential to reflect on impermanence of the five aggregates again and again. Then wisdom, the understanding gradually increases. The nature of wisdom is to overcome ignorance. When ignorance falls down. Also, the characteristics the reality of life are realized. They are impermanence (*Anicca*), suffering (*Dukkha*) and egolessness (*Anatta*). When someone can completely realize this truth through out the life, he or she doesn't have no any struggle in his life. He lives with equanimity. That is the final bliss. As the result of this spiritual path, the five spiritual faculties increase to the maximum level. They are;

1. Confidence of Buddha's enlightenment (*Saddhā - සද්ධා*)
2. Energy (*Viriya - වීරිය*)
3. Mindfulness or Awareness (*Sathi - සති*)
4. Concentration or Tranquility (*Samādhi - සමාධි*)
5. Wisdom (*Paññā - පඤ්ඤා*)

From the beginning to the end of the path of purification we have to develop these qualities again and again every moment with consciousness and understanding. As much as we practice them, we can see the result in this life. Developing mindfulness with wisdom seeing the world reality such as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness is the ultimate goal. Final result of practicing them is the liberation from all sufferings and living with the highest contentment and loving kindness. This is the contentment, satisfaction, gratification, fulfillment, happiness, pleasure and cheerfulness that Buddhism explains

May the Triple Gem Bless you! ඔබ සැමට තෙරුවන් සරණයි!

May you be mindful and wise! (සතිමත් සහ නුවණැති වන්න)

May all beings be well, happy and peaceful! (සියලු සත්ත්වයෝ සුවපත් වෙත්වා!)

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